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**WOODHAVEN RESIDENT ARRAIGNED ON ASSAULT AND
OTHER CHARGES AFTER ALLEGEDLY STRIKING SEVEN PEDESTRIANS**

Defendant Faces Up To 7 Years In Prison If Convicted

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a 24-year-old Woodhaven resident has been charged with assault, reckless endangerment and other charges after allegedly driving under the influence of alcohol and crashing into seven pedestrians outside of a nightclub.

District Attorney Brown said, "This defendant's alleged choice to drive after admittedly drinking alcohol turned his vehicle into a dangerous weapon. Seven innocent people were injured and are lucky to be alive. This case will be vigorously prosecuted."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Renis Kuci, 24, of 83-25 98th Street in Woodhaven. Kuci was arraigned this morning before Queens Criminal Court Judge Deborah Stevens Modica on charges of second-degree assault, first-degree reckless endangerment, second-degree vehicular assault, reckless driving, operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of drugs or alcohol and speeding. He was released on \$5,000 bail and faces up to 7 years in prison if convicted.

The District Attorney said that, according to the charges, the incident occurred at about 4:30 a.m., on February 22, 2009, at the intersection of Steinway Street and Northern Boulevard in Astoria while the defendant was allegedly driving his black BMW at a rate of speed in excess of 70 miles per hour, spun the vehicle in a circle and went onto the sidewalk while attempting to make a turn. The vehicle struck seven pedestrians outside of a nightclub, both male and female, ranging in age from 20 to 34 years old, and caused various injuries including a broken leg, cuts and bruises, swelling and other injuries. The defendant allegedly told police that he had "a few drinks" and refused to take a breathalyzer test.

District Attorney Brown said that the defendant was arrested by police officers from the New York City Police Department's 114th Precinct.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Marissa Gillespie of the District Attorney's Narcotic Trials Bureau under the supervision of Karen H. Rankin, Bureau Chief and Robert J. Ferino and Barry S. Weinrib, Deputy Bureau Chiefs, and the overall supervision of James C. Quinn, Senior Executive Assistant District Attorney, Trial Division, and John H. Larsen and Robert J. Masters, Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorneys.

It should be noted that a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.